

**Annual report 2014 on relations between the European Commission  
and National Parliaments.**

**(COM(2015)316**

**FINAL DOCUMENT**

The Committee on EU Policies of Italy's Chamber of Deputies,

having examined the Annual Report 2014 of the European Commission on relations with national parliaments (COM(2015)316);

taking into account the Annual Report 2014 on subsidiarity and proportionality (COM(2015)315);

taking into account the contribution adopted and the debates held by the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC) on strengthening the institutional role of National Parliaments in the EU, including in their relations with the European Commission;

Whereas:

- 1) the new Juncker Commission is making very commendable efforts to strengthen its relations with National Parliaments and, especially, to give each parliament a greater say in to the process of European decision-making;
- 2) the Commission has failed to improve the speed or quality of its responses to the observations emanating from national parliaments as part of the political dialogue. Its responses remain pre-eminently bureaucratic in nature, and show little apprehension of the political import of the parliaments' observations;
- 3) in keeping with the Commission's call for greater political dialogue at the pre-legislative stage, we welcome its practice of systematically alerting National Parliaments about public consultations that it initiates, and hope that the Commission will also offer *ex-post* responses to the contributions it receives before including them in the working documents accompanying its proposals;
- 4) the Commission's publication of "road maps" is also to be welcomed since they form an initial basis upon which it and National Parliaments can begin working together on producing better regulation;
- 5) the undertaking to strengthen the partnership with national parliaments has been honoured by, in particular, the scheduling of a greater number of hearings of EU Commissioners before National Parliaments, as Commission Vice-President Timmermans has been urging. In 2015, for example, the Italian Parliament held hearings with six Commissioners;

- 6) the work done to analyse to what extent the opinions issued by national parliaments have shaped the proposals adopted by the Commission has been productive. In particular, the 2014 Report gives an account of the modifications made to the original proposals as a result of the opinions issued by National Parliaments. Where opinions were not adopted, the Report states the reasons of the Commission for not accepting them and, where appropriate, gives several concrete examples;
- 7) the European Parliament, too, should give explicit account of its response to the contributions of National Parliaments, specifically by including a special section in reports on individual EU acts submitted by the Committees ahead of plenary sessions;

recognising that this final document must be transmitted to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission as part of the political dialogue;

does hereby express:

#### A FAVOURABLE OPINION

*with the following remarks:*

- a) to maximise the efficacy of the political dialogue, it is to be hoped that the channel of communication opened by this Commission from the moment it took office, namely the hearings of EU Commissioners before National Parliaments when major legislative initiatives are being examined, will become an established practice for the rest of the Commission's term;
- b) the quality of the Commission's responses should be improved in the manner indicated by the Vice President of the European Commission, Frans Timmermans: therefore, for the sake of engaging meaningfully with political issues raised in the opinions, the relevant Commissioners themselves rather than just the administrative offices of the Commissions should be directly involved;
- c) the Commission's commitment to strengthening political dialogue also needs to include the recognition that the continued use of the existing instruments is preferable to the introduction of any new procedures;
- d) it is to be hoped that future Annual Reports will increasingly indicate, also citing concrete examples, how the opinions of National Parliaments have been taken into account by the Commission, as well as by other EU institutions as part of the decision-making process.